THE FLYING STAG PLAYS No 6.

THE SLAVE WITH TWO FACES

EGMONT ARENS NEW YORK

THE FLYING STAG PLAYS

For The Little Theatre

No. 6

THE SLAVE WITH TWO FACES

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THE PUBLISHER.

The SLAVE WITH TWO FACES ▽ ▽ *An Allegory in One Act* by Mary Carolyn Davies ▽ ▽ as played by the Provincetown Players.

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THE SLAVE WITH TWO FACES

was first produced by the Provincetown Players at the Playwrights' Theatre, New York, on January 25th, 1918, with the following cast:

LIFE, THE SLAVE	*Ida Rauh*
FIRST GIRL	*Blanche Hays*
SECOND GIRL	*Dorothy Upjohn*
A WOMAN	*Alice MacDougal*
A MAN	*O. K. Liveright*
A YOUNG MAN	*Hutchinson Collins*
A WORKMAN	*O. K. Liveright*

OTHERS

Scene designed by Norman Jacobson. Produced under the direction of Nina Moise. Incidental music written and played by Alfred Kreymborg.

THE SLAVE WITH TWO FACES

The scene is a wood through which runs a path. Wild rose bushes and other wood-things border it. On opposite sides of the path stand two girls waiting. They have not looked at each other. The girls wear that useful sort of gown which, with the addition of a crown, makes a queen—without, makes a peasant. The first girl wears a crown. The second carries one carelessly in her hand.

FIRST GIRL

[*Looking across at the other.*]
For whom are you waiting?

SECOND GIRL

I am waiting for Life.

FIRST GIRL

I am waiting for Life also.

SECOND GIRL

They said that he would pass this way. Do you believe that he will pass this way?

FIRST GIRL

He passes all ways.

SECOND GIRL

[*Still breathing quickly.*]
I ran to meet Life.

FIRST GIRL

Are you not afraid of him?

SECOND GIRL

Yes. That is why I ran to meet him.

FIRST GIRL

[*To herself.*]
I, too, ran to meet him.

SECOND GIRL

Ah! he is coming!

FIRST GIRL

No. It is only the little quarreling words of the leaves, and the winds that are always urging them to go away.

SECOND GIRL

The leaves do not go.

FIRST GIRL

Some day they will go. And that the wind knows.

FIRST GIRL

Why are you not wearing your crown?

SECOND GIRL

Why should we wear crowns?
[*She places the crown upon her head.*]

FIRST GIRL

Do you not know?

SECOND GIRL

No.

FIRST GIRL

That is all of wisdom—the wearing of crowns before the eyes of Life.

SECOND GIRL

I do not understand you.

FIRST GIRL

Few understand wisdom—even those who need it most—

SECOND GIRL

He is coming! I heard a sound.

FIRST GIRL

It was only the sound of a petal dreaming that it had fallen from the rose-tree.

SECOND GIRL

I have waited—

FIRST GIRL

We all long for him. We cry out to him. When he comes, he hurts us, he tortures us. He kills us. Unless we know the secret.

SECOND GIRL

What is the secret?

FIRST GIRL

That he is a slave. He pretends! He pretends! But always he knows in his heart that he is a slave. Only of those who have learned his secret is he afraid.

SECOND GIRL

Tell me more!

FIRST GIRL

Over those who are afraid of him he is a tyrant. He obeys—Kings and Queens!

SECOND GIRL

Then that—

FIRST GIRL

—Is why we must never let him see us without our crowns!

SECOND GIRL

How do you know these things?

FIRST GIRL

They were told me by an old wise man, who sits outside the gate of our town.

SECOND GIRL

How did he know? Because he was one of those who are kings?

FIRST GIRL

No. Because he was one of those who are afraid.

SECOND GIRL

[*Dreamily.*]

I have heard that Life is very beautiful. Is he so?

I have heard also that he is supremely ugly; that his mouth is wide and grinning, that his eyes slant, and his nostrils are thick. Is he so?—or is he—very beautiful?

FIRST GIRL

Perhaps you will see—for yourself—
Ah!

SECOND GIRL

[*As Life saunters into view at the farthest bend of the path. He walks like a conqueror. But there is something ugly in his appearance. Life sees the girls just as a sudden sun-ray catches the jewels of their crowns. He cringes and walks like a hunchback slave. He is beautiful now.*]

FIRST GIRL

He has seen our crowns!

SECOND GIRL

Ah!

FIRST GIRL

Remember! You are only safe—as long as you remain his master. Never forget that he is a slave, and that you are a queen.

SECOND GIRL

[*To herself.*]
I must never let him see me without my crown.

FIRST GIRL

Hush! He is coming!

SECOND GIRL

He is very beautiful—

FIRST GIRL

While he is a slave.

SECOND GIRL

[*Not hearing.*]
He is—very beautiful—

FIRST GIRL

Life!

[*Life bows to the ground at her feet.*]

SECOND GIRL

[*In delight.*]

Ah!

FIRST GIRL

Life, I would have opals on a platter.

[*Life bows in assent.*]

SECOND GIRL

Oh-h!

FIRST GIRL

And pearls!

[*Life bows.*]

SECOND GIRL

Ah!

FIRST GIRL

And a little castle set within a hedge.

[*Life bows.*]

SECOND GIRL

Yes—

FIRST GIRL

I would have a fair prince to think tinkling words about me. And I would have a strawberry tart, with little flutings in the crust. Go, see that these things are made ready for me.

[*Life bows in assent and turns to go.*]

SECOND GIRL

Ah!

FIRST GIRL

See? It is so that one must act. It is thus one must manage him. So and not otherwise it is done. Now—do you try.

[*She plucks rose from bush beside her, and twirls it in her fingers.*]

SECOND GIRL

Life!

[*Life kneels.*]

I have a wish for a gown of gold.

[*Life bows.*]

FIRST GIRL

Yes!

[*And over his bowed head, the two laugh gaily at the ease of his subjection.*]

SECOND GIRL

And a little garden where I may walk and think of trumpets blowing.

[*Life bows.*]

SECOND GIRL

It is a good rule.

FIRST GIRL

[*Calling slave back as he is leaving.*]

I have a wish for a gray steed.

[*Life bows.*]

Bring me a little page, too. With golden hair. And with a dimple.

[*Life acquiesces, and starts to leave.*]

FIRST GIRL

[*Calling him back with a gesture.*]

Life! [*An important after-thought*] With two dimples!

SECOND GIRL

And an amber necklace! Bring me an amber necklace!

FIRST GIRL

[*Tossing away the rose she has just plucked.*]

And a fresh rose.

[*Life bows; turns to obey. The two are convulsed with mirth at the adventure and its success.*]

FIRST GIRL

Life!

[*Life halts.*]

SECOND GIRL

What are you going to do?

FIRST GIRL

Come here!

[*Life comes to her. With a quick movement she snatches one of the gold chains from about his neck.*]

SECOND GIRL

[*Frightened.*] How can you dare?

FIRST GIRL

What you see you must take.

[*She seizes his wrist and pulls from it a bracelet.*]

SECOND GIRL

[*Frightened.*] Ah!

FIRST GIRL

Go!

[*Exit Life.*]

SECOND GIRL

But why—

FIRST GIRL

He does not like beggars, Life. You see, he is a slave himself.

SECOND GIRL

He is so beautiful.

FIRST GIRL

Do not forget that he is your slave. . . . This rosebush [*Touches it*] is a queen who forgot.

SECOND GIRL

Ah!

FIRST GIRL

[*Pointing to bones that seemed part of bushes along roadside.*]

Those are the bones of others who forgot.

SECOND GIRL

But he *is* beautiful!

FIRST GIRL

Only so long as you are his master.

SECOND GIRL

But he is kind!

FIRST GIRL

Only so long as you are not afraid of him.

SECOND GIRL

But you snatched—

FIRST GIRL

Life is the only person to whom one should be rude.

[*They hear sounds of moaning and cries and a harsh voice menacing some unseen crowd.*]

SECOND GIRL

What is that?

FIRST GIRL

Come! We must not be seen!

[*Pulls her companion behind bush at side of stage.*]

SECOND GIRL

What will be done to us?

FIRST GIRL

Hush! If he should see you! He is always watching for the first sign of fear.

SECOND GIRL

What is the first sign of fear?

FIRST GIRL

It is a thought—

SECOND GIRL

But can he see one's thoughts—

FIRST GIRL

Only thoughts of fear.

SECOND GIRL

If one hides them well even from oneself?

FIRST GIRL

Even then. But words are more dangerous still. If we say we are afraid we will be more afraid, because whatever we make into words makes itself into our bodies.

VOICES OFF STAGE

Oh, master!
Mercy, master!

FIRST GIRL

It spoils him, this cringing. It spoils a good servant. As long as he is kept in his place—

[*A man enters and kneels, looking at Life off stage, in fear.*]

FIRST GIRL

[*Steals to man and says:*]

But he is only a slave. Do you not see that he is a slave?

MAN

How can you say that? Look at his terrible face. Who that has seen his face can doubt that he is a master, and a cruel one?

FIRST GIRL

He cannot be a master unless you make him so.

MAN

What is this that you are saying? Is it true?

FIRST GIRL

Yes, it is true. Even though it can be put into words, it is true.

MAN

[*Starts to rise, sinks to knees again.*]

Yes. I see that it is true. But go away.

FIRST GIRL

[*Crouching behind bush again.*]

Ah!

[*Life crosses the stage, with a whip of many thongs driving a huddled throng of half crouching men and women. They kneel and kiss his robe. His mouth is wide and grinning, his eyes slant, his nostrils are thick. He is hideous.*]

LIFE

You! Give me your ideals. Three ideals! Is that all you have?

YOUNG MAN

Life has robbed me of my ideals.

WORKMAN

He robbed me too.

YOUNG MAN

But I had so few.

WORKMAN

When you have toiled to possess more, he will take those from you also.

LIFE

[*To an old man.*]

For twelve hours you shall toil at what you hate. For an hour you shall work at what you love, to keep the wound fresh, to make the torture keener.

OLD MAN

Ah, pity! Do not be so cruel! Let me forget the work I love!

LIFE

Dog! Take what I give you! It is not by begging that you may win anything from me!

A VOICE

Give me a dream! A dream to strengthen my hands!

ANOTHER VOICE

A little love to make the day less terrible!

THIRD VOICE

Only rest, a little rest! Time to think of the sea, and of grasses blowing in the wind.

A WOMAN

Master!

[*Life lashes her with his whip. The woman screams. Life draws back from them, and dances a mocking dance, dancing himself into greater fury, laughing terribly, he lashes out at them. Several fall dead. He chokes a cripple with his hands. Finally he drives them off the stage before him, several furtively dragging the bodies with them.*]

SECOND GIRL

[*As the two emerge from their hiding place.*]

Oh! I wish never to see his face as they saw it!

FIRST GIRL

You will not, unless you kneel—never kneel, little queen.

SECOND GIRL

I shall never kneel to Life. I shall stand upright, as you have taught me, and I shall say, "Bring me another necklace, Life—"

FIRST GIRL

I must go now for a little while. I shall come back. Do not forget.

[*She goes out.*]

SECOND GIRL

I shall say—

[*Life's voice is heard off stage. Second Girl cowers. Life enters.*]

SECOND GIRL

Slave! I would have the chain with the red stone!

[*As Life submissively approaches, she snatches it from his neck.*]

And this!

[*Snatching at his hand and pulling the ring from a finger. The slave bows. She happens to look toward the spot where the bodies were, and shivers.*]

LIFE

[*Raising his head in time to see the look of horror. From this moment his aspect gradually changes until from the slave he becomes a tyrant.*]

Are you afraid of me?

SECOND GIRL

No.

LIFE

There are many who are afraid of me.

SECOND GIRL

You are a slave.

LIFE

There are many who are afraid.

SECOND GIRL

You are only a slave.

LIFE

A slave may become a master.

SECOND GIRL

No.

LIFE

I may become—

SECOND GIRL

You are my slave.

LIFE

If I were your master—

SECOND GIRL

You are a slave.

LIFE

If I were your master, I would be kind to you. You are beautiful.

SECOND GIRL

Ah!

LIFE

You are very beautiful.

SECOND GIRL

It is my crown that makes me beautiful.

LIFE

If you should take your crown from your head, you would still be beautiful.

SECOND GIRL

That I will not do.

LIFE

You are beautiful as the slight burning of the apple-petal's cheek when the sun glances at the great flowers near it. You are beautiful as the little pool far in the forest which holds lily-buds in its hands. You are beautiful—

SECOND GIRL

[*Aside.*]

I think he wants me to be afraid, so I will say it. I have heard that men are like that. I am not afraid, but I will say it to please him.

LIFE

Are you afraid of me?

SECOND GIRL

Yes.

LIFE

Are you afraid?

SECOND GIRL

Yes, I am afraid.

LIFE

Ah, that pleases me.

SECOND GIRL

[*Aside.*]

I knew that I would be able to please him! Whatever I make into words makes itself into my body, she said, like fear—but she does not know everything! It is impossible that she should know everything! And it is so pleasant to please him—And so easy! I am not afraid of him. I have only *said* that I am afraid.

LIFE

Will you not take your crown from your head?

SECOND GIRL

No.

LIFE

There is nothing so beautiful as a woman's hair flying in the wind. I can see your hair beneath your crown. Your hair would be beautiful flying in the wind.

SECOND GIRL

[*Removes crown.*]

It is only for a moment.

LIFE

Yes, you are beautiful.

SECOND GIRL

[*To herself.*]

It may be that I was not wise—

LIFE

You are like a new flower opening, and dazzling a passing bird with sudden color.

SECOND GIRL

She said that I must not—

LIFE

You are like the bird that passes. Your hair lifts like wings in the sun.

SECOND GIRL

He has not harmed me.

LIFE

Your crown is like jewels gathered from old galleons beneath the sea. May I see your crown?

SECOND GIRL

[*Holds it out cautiously toward him, then changes her mind.*]

No—

LIFE

Let me hold it in my fingers. I shall give it back to you.

SECOND GIRL

No.

LIFE

I shall give it back.

SECOND GIRL

If you will surely give it back to me—

LIFE

[*Takes crown.*]

But your hair is lovelier without a crown.

[*Flings it from him.*]

SECOND GIRL

What have you done?

LIFE

It was only in jest.

SECOND GIRL

But you promised—

LIFE

In jest.

SECOND GIRL

But—

LIFE

Ho-ho! Laugh with me. What a jest!

SECOND GIRL

[*Laughs, then shivers.*]

LIFE

[*In high good humor with himself.*]

Dance for me. You are young. You are happy. Dance!

SECOND GIRL

What shall my dance say?

LIFE

That it is Spring, and that there are brooks flowing, newly awakened and mad to be with the sea. That there is a white bud widening under the moon, and in a curtained room a young girl sleeping. That the sun has wakened her—

SECOND GIRL

[*Dances these things. At first she is afraid of him, then she forgets and dances with abandon.*]

And now give me back my crown.

LIFE

You do not need a crown, pretty one.

SECOND GIRL

I am afraid of you!

LIFE

Afraid of me! What have I done?

SECOND GIRL

I do not know.

LIFE

Do not be afraid.

SECOND GIRL

I am afraid.

LIFE

I shall be a kind master to you.

SECOND GIRL

Master?

LIFE

A kind master.

SECOND GIRL

You are my slave.

LIFE

I shall never be your slave again.

SECOND GIRL

And if she were right? If it is true?

LIFE

What are you saying?

SECOND GIRL

Nothing—

LIFE

You must call me master.

SECOND GIRL

No. That I will not do.

LIFE

[*Leering at her.*]

Call me master. Then I shall be kind to you.

SECOND GIRL

No. I can not.

LIFE

[*Picks up his whip from the path, toying with the whip but laughing to her.*]

Then I shall be kind.

SECOND GIRL

Master—

LIFE

It has a good sound.

SECOND GIRL

You will give me—

LIFE

Greedy one! Be grateful that I do not punish you.

SECOND GIRL

You would not strike me?

LIFE

If you do not obey—

SECOND GIRL

[*Whispering.*]

You would not strike—

LIFE

You must kneel.

SECOND GIRL

[*Repeating.*]

Never kneel, little queen—

LIFE

You must kneel to me.

SECOND GIRL

No.

LIFE

[*Raising the whip as if to strike.*]

On your knees! Slave!

SECOND GIRL

You were kind! Life, you were kind! You said beautiful words to me.

LIFE

Kneel.

SECOND GIRL

You would be always kind, you said—

LIFE

Will you obey?

SECOND GIRL

I shall never—

[*Life curls his whip around her shoulders.*]

SECOND GIRL

[*Screams.*]

Do not flog me. I will kneel.

[*Kneels.*]

LIFE

So? In that way I can win obedience.

SECOND GIRL

Master!

LIFE

It has a good sound.

SECOND GIRL

Pity! Have pity!

LIFE

Do not whine.

[*Kicks her.*]

SECOND GIRL

[*Rises staggering.*]

Spare me!

LIFE

I shall beat you, for the cries of those who fear me are sweet in my ears.

[*Beats her.*]

SECOND GIRL

Master!

LIFE

[*Flinging aside whip.*]

But sweeter yet are stilled cries—

[*He seizes her, they struggle.*]

SECOND GIRL

He is too strong—I can struggle no longer!

[*They struggle. Life chokes her to death and flings her body from him. Then, laughing horribly he goes off the stage.*]

FIRST GIRL

[*Enters skipping merrily. Singing.*]

Heigho, in April,

Heigho, heigho,
All the town in April
Is gay, is gay!
[*She plucks rose from bush.*]
Heigho, in April,
In merry, merry April,
Love came a-riding
And of a sunny day
I met him on the way!
Heigho, in April,
Heigho, heigho—

[*Suddenly seeing the body, she breaks the song, and stares without moving. Then she goes very slowly toward it, smooths down the dead girl's dress, and kneels beside the body. Whispers.*]

She was young . . . he is cruel . . . [*Touches the body.*] She also was a queen. She snatched his trinkets. See, there on her dead neck is his chain with the red fire caught in gold. And on her finger his ring. But he was too strong . . . too strong. . . . [*She stands, trembles, cowering in terror.*] Life has broken her . . . Life has broken them all. . . . Some day . . . I am afraid . . .

[*Life enters, still the ugly tyrant. She remains cowering. His eyes rove slowly over the stage, but she sees him a second before he discovers her. She straightens up just in time to be her scornful self before his eyes light upon her. As she speaks Life becomes the slave again.*]

FIRST GIRL

[*Carelessly flings rose down without seeing that it has fallen upon the body.*]

Life! Bring me a fresh rose!

[*The Slave bows abjectly and goes to do her bidding.*]

CURTAIN.